
Minutes

Washington State Committee on Geographic Names

May 1, 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Sara Palmer – Chair

Mary Schaff – WA State Library Representative

Dr. Allyson Brooks – Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Mike Iyall – Tribal Representative

Putnam Barber – Public Member

Dean Foster - Public Member

STAFF PRESENT

Caleb Maki

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Crystal Miller

Matthew O'Donnell

Guy Moura

Misty Ives

Patricia Earnest

Jennifer Runyon

Noah Oliver

Mat Jackmond

1 Washington State Committee on Geographic Names
2 May 1, 2023 - 10:00am
3 Room 175 - Natural Resources Building
4 1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia, WA 98504
5 (360) 902-1000

6
7 **Agenda**
8

9 **A. CALL TO ORDER**

10
11 **B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

12
13 **C. NAMES FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION**

14
15 **Jefferson County**

16 Passage Through – APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

17
18 **Thurston County**

19 Hopkins Ditch - APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

20
21 **D. SQ--- REPLACEMENT NAMES DEFERRED FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION**

22
23 **Chelan County**

24 Masawii Lake – APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

25 Wowpu-tushwa – DENIED

26
27 **Kittitas County**

28 Cle Elum Tarn – DENIED

29 Nosh Nosh Wahtum – APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

30
31 **Okanogan County**

32 Black Canyon Ridge – DENIED

33 Swaram Creek Ridge – APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

34 Mokeihl – DENIED

35
36 **E. ADJOURNMENT**

1 **CALL TO ORDER**

2 The Chair of the Committee Sara Palmer called the meeting to order at 10:01am. Chair Sara
3 Palmer informed the Committee that this would be her last meeting as Chair. Sara Palmer said
4 that the WA Dept. of Natural Resources is working on her replacement.

5
6 The Committee members introduced themselves and thanked Sara Palmer for her time and work
7 on the Committee on Geographic Names.

8
9 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

10 Chair Sara Palmer called for approval of the minutes for the January 19, 2023 Committee on
11 Geographic Names Meeting.

12
13 **MOITION:** Mike Iyall moved to approve the minutes.

14
15 **SECOND:** Dean Foster seconded the motion.

16
17 **ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously.

18
19 **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR PASSAGE THROUGH**

20 None

21
22 **PASSAGE THROUGH FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

23 Chair Sara Palmer asked if there was any discussion on the proposal. Dean Foster asked about a
24 letter received by the Committee from a Commissioner in Cowlitz County suggesting the name
25 “Kilisut Pass Through”. Staff said that now the Committee reaches out to all WA counties
26 regardless of geographic location of the feature. Chair Sara Palmer said she does not think the
27 name “Kilisut Pass Through” is appropriate, and the Committee has heard from S’Klallam people
28 that they do not want the word “Kilisut” used for the feature.

29
30 Dean Foster said that he likes the idea of a having a geographic description, like is common with
31 rivers and other features. Dean Foster said according to the letter, there are other features that have
32 low tide passages, and would like this feature name to be more geographically precise.

33
34 Mike Iyall said that he would like to point out that common names are often used, and a book
35 could not hold all the locations of the “Green” rivers in the country.

36
37 Mary Schaff said she was curious if the letter was referring to a descriptive name like “passage
38 through”, and she could see that being used all the time but was not aware of another feature
39 officially called Passage Through.

40
41 Chair Sara Palmer read the email to the Committee and mentioned that the Committee has heard
42 several times from local Tribes that the name “Kilisut” is not wanted for the feature.

43
44 Dr. Allyson Brooks said that the proposed name does not bother her, giving an example of the
45 many Jefferson Counties across the United States and the confusion between Washington State

1 and Washington D.C.

2

3 Mary Schaff said that this name comes out of a discussion the Committee had with the Tribal
4 Members who originally proposed a name for this feature. Mary Schaff said that it would be
5 appropriate to follow the guidelines from the discussion with the proponents.

6

7 One of the proponents, Misty Ives was able to join the meeting virtually and asked to speak.

8

9 Misty Ives introduced herself as the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.
10 Misty Ives read to the Committee a description of the feature that mentioned the feature was not
11 officially named. Misty Ives said that the feature does have history to the Port Gamble S’Klallam
12 Tribe and geographic features and landscapes are central to the Tribe’s traditional knowledge,
13 values, and identity.

14

15 Misty Ives said that the Tribe had a canoe journey through the feature and camped along the shore.
16 Misty Ives said that this was a historic moment, as Tribal canoes have not gone through the feature
17 for over 80 years. Misty Ives said that the area provides shelter from the wind when the water is
18 rough.

19

20 Misty Ives said that the Tribe will post signage and other information about the feature and the
21 traditional spelling. Misty Ives said that the canoe journey meant a lot to the Tribe, and she is here
22 today to ask the Committee to approve the proposed name Passage Through.

23

24 MOTION: Mary Schaff motioned to approve the name Passage Through.

25

26 SECOND: Mike Iyall seconded the motion.

27

28 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to send Passage Through to the Board on
29 Geographic Names with the Committee’s recommendation to approve.

30

31 Following the motion, Chair Sara Palmer congratulated the proponent and said that this was on
32 her list of things to wrap up. Misty Ives thanked the Committee members and asked the Committee
33 if there was anything else she needed to do concerning the proposal. Sara Palmer said she would
34 now go before the WA Board on Geographic Names with this proposal and ask for their approval.

35

36 **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR HOPKINS DITCH**

37 Mat Jackmond, the proponent, addressed the Committee. Mat Jackmond said that this feature has
38 always been Hopkins Ditch during his 40-year term as the manager for the Hopkins Drainage Ditch
39 District. Mat Jackmond said that it’s difficult enough to keep the water flowing, and it’s becoming
40 harder and harder to manage with regulations. Mat Jackmond thanked the Committee for hearing
41 the proposal and said that he was told this was the process to get the name officially approved.

42

43 **HOPKINS DITCH FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

44 Mary Schaff said the librarian in her wants to know the origin of the Hopkins name, but she would
45 support this proposal. Mat Jackmond did say that he was able to find the origins of Jones Road, it
46 comes from one of the names of the viewers that gave a report to the County Commissioners about

1 the ditch in the 1870's.
2
3 Dean Foster said that he was concerned originally that the Committee was getting into a power
4 struggle and choosing sides, but now he believes naming the feature is the right thing to do. Chair
5 Sara Palmer said that the feature does influence the surrounding landscape and is indeed a ditch
6 and not a creek. Mat Jackmond said that prior to the ditch, the area was referred to as a swamp
7 and was "not fit to live in" according to a map in the 1870's.
8
9 MOTION: Dean Foster motioned to approve the name Hopkins Ditch.
10
11 SECOND: Mary Schaff seconded the motion.
12
13 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to send Hopkins Ditch to the Board on
14 Geographic Names with the Committee's recommendation to approve.
15
16 **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR SQ--- REPLACEMENT NAMES DEFERRED FOR INITIAL**
17 **CONSIDERATION**
18 Guy Moura, representing the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation addressed the
19 Committee. Guy Moura said he has given this some consideration and the first item he would like
20 to talk about is the Black Canyon Ridge proposal. Guy Moura said that the feature is in the Methow
21 and not in the Ceded Lands of the Yakama Reservation, and for this feature he would like the
22 Committee to approve the name Swaram Creek Ridge.
23
24 Guy Moura said the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation does not have a Tribal name
25 for the feature in Kittitas County and will defer to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the
26 Yakama Nation as to the name.
27
28 Guy Moura said that it is his preference for the feature in Chelan County to be Masawii Lake as
29 proposed by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.
30
31 Noah Oliver, representing the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, addressed
32 the Committee next. Noah Oliver said that he has spoken with Guy Moura several times and
33 prefers the name Nosh Nosh Wahtum for the feature in Kittitas County because it is part of the
34 legendary teaching of the area.
35
36 Noah Oliver said that the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation does have a name
37 and a story for the feature in the Methow, Mokeihl. Noah Oliver said that the feature is outside of
38 the Yakama Reservation and Ceded Lands but is within the Usual and Accustomed Areas of the
39 Yakama Nation. Noah Oliver said that they are not at common ground on the name for the Methow
40 feature yet, however the proposed name Masawii Lake might be acceptable to the Yakama Nation
41 for the feature in Chelan County. Noah Oliver said he appreciates the efforts to find common
42 ground between the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and the Confederated
43 Tribes of the Colville Reservation.
44
45 Chair Sara Palmer clarified with Noah Oliver that the Yakama Nation could accept the name
46 Masawii Lake in Chelan County, but the Yakama Nation has a different interpretation of the

1 meaning of the name. Noah Oliver said that was correct and there was not opposition to the name
2 as the location is correct, the difference was the interpretation in the text of the letter sent by the
3 Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Noah Oliver said that it is not up to him as a
4 staff member, but there could be a path forward.

5
6 Chair Sara Palmer asked if the Committee could move forward with the name Masawii Lake.
7 Noah Oliver said he would have to hear something from Guy Moura before moving forward.

8
9 Guy Moura said that there was no objection to how the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the
10 Yakama Nation interpreted the name.

11
12 Chair Sara Palmer said that it sounds like there is agreement with two of the three features. Noah
13 Oliver said that he has not verified the spelling for “Masawii” but didn’t know if it was a “kick the
14 can down the road” scenario or not.

15
16 Mike Iyall said that there is no correct English spelling for his last name, and there may not be one
17 for many historic Native places. Mike Iyall said that there may be accepted variations, but never
18 absolutely correct ones.

19
20 Noah Oliver said that was a fair point and could accept the spelling if it advances the other names.
21 Mary Schaff asked staff if there can be variant spellings submitted to the U.S. Board on Geographic
22 Names with the officially approved name. Noah Oliver said he was fine with the Masawii Lake
23 spelling and thanked Mike Iyall for his words.

24
25 Dr. Allyson Brooks asked for clarification if there was a concern for spelling or pronunciation.
26 Noah Oliver said that he verified that the feature was a place used historically but had not verified
27 the spelling. Noah Oliver said he was comfortable moving forward after Mike Iyall’s words.

28
29 Chair Sara Palmer asked U.S. Board on Geographic Names staff to clarify variant names for
30 features. Matthew O'Donnell from the U.S. BGN said Policy X allows the Tribe to submit variant
31 names to the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) Database.

32
33 Dr. Allyson Brooks asked if the Committee could go through these one by one to prevent
34 confusion.

35
36 **MASAWII LAKE FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

37
38 MOTION: Dr. Allyson Brooks motioned to approve the name Masawii Lake.

39
40 SECOND: Mike Iyall seconded the motion.

41
42 Mary Schaff said that she wanted to thank the Tribal members for being here today and Chair Sara
43 Palmer agreed.

44
45 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to send Masawii Lake to the Board on
46 Geographic Names with the Committee’s recommendation to approve.

1
2 **NOSH NOSH WAHTUM FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

3
4 MOTION: Mike Iyall motioned to approve the name Nosh Nosh Wahtum.

5
6 SECOND: Putnam Barber seconded the motion.

7
8 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to send Nosh Nosh Wahtum to the Board on
9 Geographic Names with the Committee's recommendation to approve.

10
11 **SWARAM CREEK RIDGE FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

12 Chair Sara Palmer asked staff if it would be possible to submit Mokeihl to the U. S. BGN as a
13 variant name for Swaram Creek Ridge. Mary Schaff said that it sounds like it is possible but
14 wanted to defer to the proponents. Chair Sara Palmer said that a path forward could be for staff to
15 contact the GNIS administrator and ask for the variant name of Mokeihl to be added to the feature.

16
17 Guy Moura asked the Committee to clarify if Mokeihl is added as a variant, which name would be
18 the primary name. Chair Sara Palmer referenced a list of the names approved by the U.S. Board
19 on Geographic Names that called the feature Swaram Creek Ridge. Sara Palmer said her
20 suggestion would be to send Mokeihl as a variant for Swaram Creek Ridge to the U.S. BGN and
21 deny the proposal Black Canyon Ridge due to lack of public support. Sara Palmer thanked the
22 Black Canyon Ridge proponent but said that there were two strong proposals from the Tribes.

23
24 MOTION: Dr. Allyson Brooks motioned to approve the name Swaram Creek Ridge and send
25 Mokeihl as the variant name for the feature to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

26
27 SECOND: Mary Schaff seconded the motion.

28
29 Noah Oliver asked for clarification as to what happens when WA confirms a name already
30 approved by the U.S. Board. Chair Sara Palmer said that WA would add Swaram Creek Ridge to
31 the list of approved names in WA, so as to match the U.S. Board's decision. Noah Oliver said he
32 wanted to clarify that the Yakama Nation is opposed to the name Swaram Creek Ridge. Dr.
33 Allyson Brooks said that the decision was already made at the Federal level to name the feature
34 Swaram Creek Ridge, and this decision today would allow WA to match the US BGN decisions.
35 Noah Oliver said that he just wanted the Committee to know that the Yakama Nation was opposed
36 to Swaram Creek Ridge.

37
38 Mary Schaff said that this is a tricky situation, but she is comfortable approving these names. Chair
39 Sara Palmer agreed that this is a complex issue with no easy solution.

40
41 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to send Swaram Creek Ridge to the Board on
42 Geographic Names with the Committee's recommendation to approve and send the U.S. Board on
43 Geographic Names the name Mokeihl as a variant name.

44
45 **BLACK CANYON RIDGE FINAL CONSIDERATION (Action Item)**

46 MOTION: Mike Iyall motioned to deny the name Black Canyon Ridge.

1
2 SECOND: Dr. Allyson Brooks seconded the motion.

3
4 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously to deny the name Black Canyon Ridge.

5
6 Dean Foster asked if the recommendations so far made by the WA Board concerning the
7 replacement names have been approve by the U.S. Board. Chair Sara Palmer said that she has
8 only heard of only name approved by the U.S. Board that was not heard by the WA Board. Putnam
9 Barber said that the Committee should try to get that name added to the list of approved names by
10 the Committee.

11
12 Putnam Barber asked if staff could try to find more information concerning the name that was not
13 approved by the WA Board. Dean Foster asked if there would be some kind of announcement of
14 the names approved at the WA level, and Sara Palmer said she will work with staff on an
15 announcement.

16
17 **ADJOURNMENT**

18 The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 am.